

TAKE FLIGHT

Exploring our aviation heritage

Aviation Heritage

Lincolnshire

a partnership of Lincolnshire's aviation heritage



Working for the War Effort

Key Stage 2

History:

Chronological understanding

Historical interpretation

Historical enquiry

British History

Key Stage 2

English:

Speaking and listening

Group discussion

Writing

Composition

Planning and drafting

Reading

Understanding texts

Reading for information

Non fiction and non-literary texts

Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre has an excellent Home Front resource pack. Metheringham Airfield Visitor Centre offers schools the opportunity to experience what life was like for children in a 1940s classroom. These activities are offered in addition to these resources.

Overview of the activities

Looking at the different roles taken in Wartime Britain.

Examining the roles of people on the Home Front.

Home Front

Preparation

PowerPoint: Home Front

Venues

Cranwell Aviation Heritage Centre

Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre

Metheringham Airfield Visitor Centre

Thorpe Camp Visitor Centre.

Activity: Home Front

Explain that the Second World War involved most of the population of Britain. Young men were conscripted into the Armed forces. Winston Churchill called for every man woman and child to join the War Effort.

Before the War, men and women had very definite roles. Men went out to work and women could be housewives or they could work in 'female' roles such as nursing or domestic service. During the War all of that changed as men were called up to the armed forces.

Discussion

Start with a discussion of what sorts of jobs men and women would do before the War. What were the consequences of men signing up to the armed forces for women?

What sorts of jobs would women be required to do during the War?

Ask young people to think about everyday jobs and jobs that were essential because of the War.

Research

Ask children to research the role of women in the War. What did they do? How much were they paid? How many women joined the armed forces? What were their roles?

What happened at the end of the War when all the men came back?
Use the background information as a starting point.

There are a number of video clips that can be used to show living histories of women in the War.

Children may find these weblinks helpful

This videoclip introduces the ATA

[youtube.com/watch?v=goZ0k85-Fc8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goZ0k85-Fc8)

This link leads to oral histories of two women who joined the WRAF in Lincolnshire.

<http://www.visitlincolnshire.com/aviation/oral-histories>

Plenary

When children have carried out their research, ask them to feedback their findings to the class. They must remember to quote their sources of information.

Extension

Ask children to write an account of a day in the life of one of the women they have researched.

Background information

The Second World War involved most of the population of Britain. Winston Churchill called for every man, woman and child to join the War Effort.

Before the War, men and women had very definite roles. Men went out to work and women were housewives or they worked in 'female' roles as shop assistants, as nurses or in domestic service. During the War all of that changed as men were called up to the armed forces.

Men went to War or volunteered to be fire fighters or air raid wardens to support the Home Front.

As the men left to fight, there was a shortage of people to do traditional male jobs, so women aged between 20 and 30 were called up to work in these roles. Women were in demand to be:

- Engineers
- Mechanics
- Tank drivers
- Ship builders
- Factory workers, (in Lincolnshire many women repaired aircraft and made bombs)
- Air raid wardens
- Work for the fire service driving fire engines
- Plumbers
- Ambulance drivers
- WRVS volunteers
- Nurses
- Pilots

And even though they were not required to do so, 640,000 women signed up to the Armed Forces. 55,000 of these women used guns and were an essential part of air defence. This video gives an insight into the lives of women pilots and the struggle they had to be recognised and allowed to fly in the Air Transport Auxiliary. ([youtube.com/watch?v=goZ0k85-Fc8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goZ0k85-Fc8)). These women delivered aircraft and flew unarmed. They had to have 500 flying hours before they were allowed to join the ATA, many more than male pilots joining the RAF. Some women worked behind enemy lines to support the Resistance in Europe.

80,000 women signed up to the Land Army. When the War started, because Britain is an island, the Government was worried about the supply of food and crops. It wanted to increase the amount of food grown in Britain and decrease the country's reliance on imports. The Women's Land Army worked on farms growing crops and looking after animals. The women worked long weeks, 50 hours and they were paid £1.85 but this was increased to £2.85 in 1944.

Around Lincolnshire many women worked in factories repairing bombers.

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Before the Second World War started, the Government began a major re-equipment programme for the RAF as it witnessed Germany increasing its military. Lincoln, with its long history of building aircraft, was in a good position to handle large contracts for the RAF but most of the contracts went to the Midlands. The contracts went to the Midlands because Lincoln was close to the East Coast which was vulnerable to attack. The Midlands also had a large supply of labour experienced in motor manufacturing.

As the War started it soon became clear that there was a need for major repair facilities to support operational RAF airfields. In 1940 the Repair Organisation was set up to provide a link between the Bomber Command and the Avro factories which had just started to provide Manchester bombers to the RAF.

As the War continued, Manchester bombers were replaced by Lancasters and the Repair Organisation expanded rapidly.

Many women were employed in these factories. Not only did they repair aircraft but they also prepared aircraft for special missions such as the raids on the Mohne and Eder dams.